



South Dakota Department of the Military South Dakota Department of Veterans Affairs



SOUTH DAKOTA VETERANS COMMISSION ELECTS LEADERSHIP FOR COMING YEAR

The South Dakota Veterans Commission elected new officers to lead the Commission in enhancing the lives of South Dakota veterans.

Lori Vosika of Hot Springs was elected chair, and Kella With Horn of Aberdeen was elected vice chair. Vosika succeeds Helen Parr of Sioux Falls.

"The partnerships that have been cultivated to support, honor and serve our veterans, their families, and our military here in South Dakota through the vision and leadership of the South Dakota Department of Veterans Affairs is remarkable," said Vosika. "I am grateful to be one of those partners as a member of, and now in a leadership role, on the Veterans Commission. I'm excited about what the future will bring for our heroes of South Dakota.

I look forward to creating new opportunities for the Commission, to further shape and influence that future."



Lori Vosika and Kella With Horn

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COMMISSION (CONTINUED)

Brooks Schild, of Yankton, has been appointed by the Governor to serve on the Veterans Commission. Schild succeeds Mike Birnbaum who served on the Commission since 2005. Secretary Zimmerman presented Birnbaum with a certificate of appreciation from Governor Daugaard.

"Brooks Schild is an outstanding candidate for the South Dakota Veterans Commission," said Zimmerman. "His military career continues as a First Sergeant in the South Dakota National Guard. He is also a science teacher at Yankton Middle School and mentors students in athletics while serving as their coach. His combat experience gives him vast knowledge for our new era veterans and all the matters they may have. We are truly blessed to have him serve in this capacity for our state and all of our veterans."

The Commission met in Hot Springs this week and had the opportunity to tour the State Veterans Home and Cemetery. The next Commission meeting will be held January 10, 2018, in Pierre.



Commissioners (L to R) Brooks Schild, Lori Vosika, Kella With Horn, Helen Parr, Jim Ross and K.C. Russell.

SING PROUD! SING LOUD AMERICA!

MESSAGE FROM SECRETARY ZIMMERMAN —

Being a citizen of the United States means being brave, being proud of this Country, and being confident that we will succeed. Being an American is an honor and as such it is important that we support our troops that have and are fighting for our Country.

This past week, the citizens of South Dakota had the great honor to welcome home the South Dakota Army National Guard's 153rd Engineer Battalion and its Forward Support Company from their deployment to the Middle East, as well as send-off the 189th Aviation Regiment as they deploy for the Middle East.

Sometimes when words fail us, a song will fill our hearts with pride and move us forward. Powerful lyrics have inspired our lives for generations in church, in school, and in our communities.

Personally, I have found great comfort in songs like: America the Beautiful, God Bless America, the National Anthem, the Battle Hymn of the Republic, and God Bless the USA.

During my 63 years of life I have had many occasions to hear Irving Berlin's "God Bless America." As a soldier, the words come naturally and I swell with pride in knowing the land we love and stand beside are guarded by our military personnel. I know there is always a brother or sister near me that has the same cause and ideals.

Hearing Lee Greenwood's "God Bless the USA" at deployments and demobilizations for the last ten years, especially since my own tour of duty and service, brings me to my feet in pride of service, and remembrance of all those that gave the ultimate sacrifice. As Greenwood sings, "And I'm proud to be an American, where at least I know I'm free, and I won't forget the men who died who gave that right to me," I stand tall. I stand proud. I stand thankful.

It's about these men and women who put their lives on the line for us. We benefited—every one of us—from their service and sacrifice. Let's be there for them the same way they were there for us.

At a time when our country faces so many challenges, let's continue to find time to hum or sing America the Beautiful, God Bless America, the National Anthem, the Battle Hymn of the Republic, God Bless the USA and numerous other songs that highlight the legacy we have achieved. We are America. Stand proud and sing loud!

Larry Zimmerman, Secretary
South Dakota Department of Veterans Affairs



SD GUARD SOLDIERS RETURN HOME FROM MIDDLE EAST

About 165 soldiers from the South Dakota Army National Guard's 153rd Engineer Battalion and its Forward Support Company were welcomed home by family and friends in Huron, Sept. 30, after returning from duty in the Middle East.

The Huron and Parkston-based units served 10 months providing command and control of attached engineer units. Members of the unit served in multiple locations throughout the region, including Iraq and Syria.

"It is great to be home! I believe everyone in our formation would tell you that it was a great experience and a very rewarding mission," said Lt. Col. Trent Bruce, 153rd commander. "The soldiers of the 153rd represented their state and nation in an outstanding manner."

Many government leaders were also pleased to see the Soldiers return home safe. Lt. Gov. Matt Michels, U.S. Senators John Thune and Mike Rounds, U.S. Representative Kristi Noem and Huron Mayor Paul Aylward were at the event and praised the Soldiers for their service.

"The South Dakota National Guard is our state's pride and joy," Thune said during the ceremony. "We thank you for a job well done and mission accomplished."

"None of us in elected office, none of us that have a business, none of us that have dreams that we make possible could do that without the rule of law and you women and men serving as soldiers and keeping us safe under a civilian government secured by liberties," said Michels. "You have put your lives on the line for that and were put into harm's way. Thank you for our freedom."

During the unit's deployment, the 153rd's primary mission was to provide general engineering and maneuver support to the Combined Joint Forces Land Component Command and Special Operations Joint Task Force. The unit served as operational command of five attached units totaling 550 Soldiers.

The 153rd operated in 24 different locations across four countries. In all, the unit completed more than 100 engineer construction projects, 11 bridge emplacements and 160 technical engineering support requirements, such as surveys and reconnaissance missions.

Many of the missions ensured freedom of movement for U.S. and coalition forces around the region, base infrastructure upgrades and improvements to force protection. Many of the engineer projects supported multiple operations throughout the deployment, to include key offensive objectives to liberate Mosul, Iraq, and the seizure of Raqqa, Syria.

"We literally changed the landscape of Iraq and Syria through the missions we were assigned and accomplished," said Bruce. "We had a very fast paced, busy mission, and every single soldier stepped up to exceed expectations."

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SD GUARD SOLDIERS RETURN HOME FROM MIDDLE EAST (CONTINUED)

The 153rd's Forward Support Company also provided key logistics and maintenance support during the deployment. The unit maintained a 95 percent operational rate on over 550 pieces of military equipment, delivered over 2.5 million gallons of fuel, prepared over 800,000 meals and ordered and installed over \$2.5M of repair parts, to name a few.

The significance of the unit's mission was also echoed by the SDNG's highest ranking member.

"One-hundred years ago today, the South Dakota National Guard was fully mobilized fighting in World War I and just 20 years later they were in World War II," said Maj. Gen. Tim Reisch, SDNG adjutant general, while addressing the soldiers. "This mobilization is just as big a part of our history and legacy as any of those previous wars."

Thune also reinforced the general's message.

"We are grateful for the contributions you have made throughout our state and nation's history and continue to make day in and day out," added Thune. "You have the qualities of those patriots who founded this country, who've defended it, and we live in a free country today - the greatest country on the face of the planet - because of the men and women in uniform who are willing to sacrifice to make it so."

Bruce ended the ceremony praising the unit and its soldiers for their service.

"I am honored to be the commander of this unit and carry on the tradition and legacy of the 153rd," said Bruce. "I am extremely proud of the professionalism and work ethic the soldiers displayed throughout the deployment. The soldiers did the state proud and without a doubt left an impression on everyone we worked with."



SCHEDULE FOR VABHHCS FLU SHOTS

The VABHHCS announces that veterans enrolled in VA Health Care may obtain their flu vaccine at any of the upcoming walk-in clinics. To receive a flu shot they will need to bring their Veteran Affairs identification card. Veterans may also be vaccinated during a regularly scheduled appointment.

Fort Meade VA Medical Center

Friday, October 6—8:00 a.m. to 4:00 p.m.

Walk-in Clinic: Monday – Friday 11:00 a.m. to 12:00 p.m.
2:30 p.m. to 3:30 p.m.

Hot Springs VA Medical Center: Primary Care

Wed/Thurs, October 4-5—9:00 a.m. to 2:00 p.m.

Tues/Wed, October 10-11—9:00 a.m. to 4:00 p.m.

Friday, October 13—8:00 a.m. to 4:00 p.m.

Tues/Wed, October 17—8:00 a.m. to 4:00 p.m.

Friday, October 20—8:00 a.m. to 4:00 p.m.

Monday, October 23—8:00 a.m. to 4:00 p.m.

Wednesday, October 25—8:00 a.m. to 4:00 p.m.

Monday, November 6—9:00 a.m. to 4:00 p.m.

Monday, November 20—9:00 a.m. to 4:00 p.m.

Wednesday, November 22—8:00 a.m. to 4:00 p.m.

Rapid City VA Clinic: Primary Care

Friday, October 13—7:00 a.m. to 4:30 p.m.

Tuesday, November 7—7:00 a.m. to 4:30 p.m.



VETERANS TOWN HALL

OCTOBER 12

Elks Lodge

600 W. Kemp, Watertown, SD

4:30 PM

Darwin Goodspeed, Director of the Sioux Falls VA Health Care System, and Shawn Bohn, Director of the Dakotas Regional Office, will present brief updates and invite you to ask questions about care and services at the Sioux Falls VA. VA staff will also be available to discuss individual questions from 3:30-4:30 PM before the town hall.

★ ★ ★ ★ HERO ★ ★ ★ ★ APPRECIATION



OCT. 14TH, 2017



BHSU FOOTBALL GAME

★ ★ ★ ★ ATTENTION HEROES

BHSU athletics would like to invite all military personnel, law enforcement, firefighters, and EMS personnel for "Hero's Appreciation" as the Yellow Jacket football team hosts Western State Colorado University at 12noon. All Military, Law Enforcement, Firefighter, and EMS personnel will receive (2) tickets for the game with ID.



OPERATION HEART WARMING

SDDVA's Erin Bultje attended the Support Siouxland Soldiers "Operations Warming Hearts" program in Sioux City, Iowa last night. Soup and chili were provided for all that attended and before departing all were provided a box of groceries.

The local Elks Lodge donated brand new winter coats for little kids and adults. The Micah Project provided gently used clothing, shoes and winter gear and Operation Engage America hosted the resource fair.

As part of the resource fair, Bultje used this opportunity to talk to veterans and military personnel about benefits and services, as well as share the mission of South Dakota Joining Forces.



DAVISON COUNTY VSO TEAM

The Davison County Veteran Service Office team participated in the annual Dakota Wesleyan University Homecoming Parade.

This year's theme was the 90s. In staying true to military format, they chose 'Storming to Victory' – in honor and memory of our Desert Storm heroes. These creative engineers turned their trailer into an Abrams tank.



INFORMATION TO SHARE WITH VETERANS

Don't forget to share information with your veterans about SDHDA's Governor's House Program. To learn more about the program, qualifications, pricing and features, visit: <http://www.sdhda.org/homeownership/governors-house-program/governors-house-program.html>.



HY-VEE WILL PROVIDE FREE BREAKFAST FOR VETERANS

Hy-Vee has demonstrated their support for our heroes by providing free breakfasts for veterans and active duty military members on Veterans Day—November 11. Hy-Vee views this as a great way of thanking veterans and military members for their service to the country

If you visit the Yankton Hy-Vee, you will be provided an additional treat. Local veterans display a special exhibit showcasing the legacy of their service.



STATE VETERANS HOME UPDATE

Residents at the Michael J. Fitzmaurice State Veterans Home had the opportunity to visit the "Pumpkin Patch" this week. Hopefully we will all get a special invite for some homemade pumpkin pie!!!!!!

Jim Davis says it best!
"Vegetables are a must on a diet. I suggest carrot cake, zucchini bread, and pumpkin pie!"



Upcoming Events

Oct 5—Aberdeen Area Healthy Aging Resource Fair—Bethlehem Lutheran Church in Aberdeen (1620 NE Milwaukee Avenue) - 12:30—4:00 pm (CT)
 Oct 6-8—Fall VFW Conference—Oacoma—Cedar Shores
 Oct 7—Homecomings for VFW State Commander Williamson and VFW State Auxiliary President Alm—Cedar Shores—Oacoma—6:00 pm (CT)
 Oct 7—SDSU to host PVA at Jack Rabbit football game—Dana Dykhouse Stadium—6:00 pm (CT)
 Oct 9—State Offices Closed
 Oct 21—Derr Foundation Gala—Rushmore Plaza Civic Center—Rapid City—5:00 pm (MT)
 Nov 4—Public Agent Orange Forum—Meade County Court House in Sturgis (2nd Floor Commissioners Chambers—1300 Sherman Street) 9:00 am and 1:00 pm (MT)
 Nov 8—SD Veterans Council Meeting—PVA Headquarters in Sioux Falls—10:00 am (CT)
 Nov 9-13—VFW Disabled Veterans Hunt—Gettysburg
 Nov 10—State Offices Closed
 Nov 11—SDSU Military Appreciation Day—Kickoff at 2:00 pm (CT)
 Nov 11—American Heroes Outdoors Veterans Day Banquet—Aberdeen Elks Lodge 1046—5:00 pm (CT)
 Nov 11-12—Sea of Goodwill Equine Experience Retreat—Joy Ranch—Watertown
 Nov 15—Veterans Council Legislative Round Table—DAV Headquarters—Sioux Falls—12:00 noon (CT)
 Nov 16—Veterans Council Legislative Round Table—Watertown American Legion—12:00 noon (CT)
 Nov 18—Veterans Council Legislative Round Table—Rapid City VFW Post—10:00 am (MT)
 Dec 2-3—Yellow Ribbon for the 153rd EN—Mitchell
 Dec 5—Governor's Budget Address—1:00 pm (CT)
 December 25—State Offices Closed

2018

Jan 1—State Offices Closed
 Jan 9—Governor's State of the State Address—1:00 pm (CT)
 Jan 10—SD Veterans Commission Meeting—RedRossa in Pierre—9:00 am (CT)
 Jan 10—SDDVA/Veterans Council Legislative Reception—RedRossa in Pierre—5:00—8:00 pm (CT)
 Jan 28-29—VFW Legislative Conference—Ft. Pierre
 Feb 16-18 American Legion Mid Winter Conference—Oacoma
 Jun 7-10—American Legion State Convention—Spearfish
 Jun 14-17—VFW State Convention—Sioux Falls

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